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17 September 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director

SUBJECT: Crisis Management and Operations Centers

25X1 [] August memorandum to you concerning the advanced DoD plans for crisis and collection management is a fair representation of some of the issues raised by the nature of those plans,

25X1 Stated simply, DoD is prepared to invest sizeable sums, looking ahead to [] and other advanced systems, to arrange for fast and full dissemination of large quantities of data to subordinate commands. Dissemination nets will be matched by a centralized operational and intelligence center in the Pentagon. Within this action an information center will be a centralized collection coordination facility that will develop Pentagon tasking for intelligence collection to meet crisis needs and to enhance crisis management. The DoD has been quite open in all this and we, and others in government, have been quite fully informed as the plans have evolved.

Many millions of dollars are going into all this. Their duplication in any meaningful sense elsewhere in government is not very likely.

There are two basic issues raised by this:

- a. How does the DCI influence, guide or control the intelligence aspects of these crisis arrangement facilities?
- b. How does the National Command Authority (in particular, the President, the NSC Staff and the Secretaries of State and Defense) preserve its ability to control the policy and decision-making aspects of crisis management?

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The prime objective in crisis management is to limit the chances for escalation to major hostilities. In practice, this usually boils down to a series of moves and counter-moves by the crisis participants, each calculated in advance to convey signals intended to be read with clarity.

The premium on solid intelligence analysis amid the throes of the crisis goes up as stakes increase. It is the ability to predict and read the other side's reactions to a policy move that can make the difference in successful management of a critical situation. Hence, it is essential that intelligence analysis in critical circumstances proceed from an understanding of operational policy decisions taken or being considered by our side.

The consolidation of operations and intelligence in its nerve-center will enhance DoD prospects for assessing developments during a crisis. But the enhancement occurs within one operational arm of the government and the question is how to insure policy control over a departmental crisis management system that may have within it the power to get out in front of our policy-makers and thus narrow their options.

Related to this question is the phenomenon that has attached to most past crises of major dimension. As the crisis erupts or deepens, policy command at the top tends to restrict the numbers of those giving consideration to policy decisions. Whether to avoid leaks or to lessen the impact of kibitzers, information -- including intelligence information -- is passed to restricted numbers of players in the game, at least until the main policy thrust is decided. Are arrangements for wide-open spigots and full dissemination of large quantities of intelligence information (including raw imagery) to subordinate commands here and abroad in keeping with the policy-makers' innate preference for tight control when the times grow critical?

CIA's experience with its task forces during times of crisis is rather mixed. The concentrated, round-the-clock analytical and production efforts of those task forces have been exemplary but the Agency has not always been privy to (or made effective use of) operational policy data which, as stated, is key to solid intelligence analysis and estimating.

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In your tenure as DCI, and under [] the CIA Operations Center is a facility much farther advanced than that of the past. And other advances have been and are being made. With encouragement from you and the IC Staff, progress is being made in providing modern means for improved communication and consultation among community operations centers and analysts.

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Still, given the state of DoD planning, and the unlikelihood that State or Defense is willing to join up, there is no real prospect of a Langley national center, though this is not to say that improvements at Langley need be slowed.

There are three possible areas for your action in dealing with this subject.

- First is that of asserting DCI interest in and guidance of the intelligence aspects of the various operations centers. This is probably best done by arranging for DCI evaluation of the performance of the operations centers in intelligence activities. By their nature, the NIO's will be intimately involved, in times of crisis, in the work of operations centers and this will give the DCI some degree of substantive overview. The IC Staff is prepared to make the evaluation of operations centers' performance one of its major responsibilities. All of this can be summed up and made a matter of record in a DCI letter to ASDI or SecDef.

- Second is the desirability of having CIA take a good hard look at the adequacy of its plans for future analysis and collection arrangements in time of crisis. There is a necessity in continuing the CIA practice of creating task forces to function in the CIA operations center. In fact, there is value in insuring a CIA ability to continue to provide independent reporting to senior policy-makers.

But, what about collection procedures and plans for future analytical efforts employing methods and technologies consistent with oncoming systems? (DIA's plans for a Centralized Collection Facility cannot be faulted. Many of us are convinced that a major new dimension of the successful analyst in the days of [] and beyond will be his ability to define speedily a series of new questions and collection tasks, matched against specific collection systems, in order to improve the precision of his knowledge. CIA planning should take this into the account.)

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An Agency examination of its projected crisis management machinery should involve a look at its operations center, its facilities and its plans. Will it have the wherewithal to provide maximum support to Agency task forces and to play a constructive role within the community?

• Third is the need to arrange for consideration of the government's crisis management machinery by the President, the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense, so that arrangements now planned will get blessing or revision. We think it a fit topic for NSC consideration. (You will recall NSDM 242 of January 1974 which decreed that "the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, in consultation with the Secretaries of State and Defense and the Director of Central Intelligence, shall conduct a continuing evaluation of the national level crisis management procedures.") You may want to consider, too, the possibility of obtaining PFIAB or Congressional interest in the subject, but this would be more apt to backfire than to be helpful at this stage.

If you agree, we can proceed to prepare the following for your action:

- a. A letter to DoD authorities asserting your interest in all intelligence aspects of crisis management and outlining the ways in which you intend to monitor those aspects. The methods will involve strong efforts by the NIO's and the IC Staff on your behalf;
- b. A memorandum to Agency authorities requesting a study of Agency crisis management procedures and plans as outlined above;
- c. A paper for possible NSC consideration describing current and projected community arrangements in support of crisis management and listing issues worthy of deliberation by top-level policy-makers.

[Redacted Signature]

E. H. Knoche

Associate Deputy to the DCI
for the Intelligence Community

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